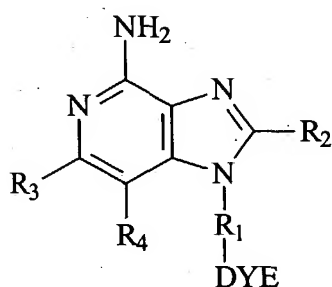


WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A compound of the formula (I):



(I)

wherein:

R_1 is a spacer group;

R_2 is hydrogen, alkyl, hydroxyalkyl, haloalkyl, aminoalkyl, alkylaminoalkyl, dialkylaminoalkyl, amidoalkyl, alkylamidoalkyl, dialkylamidoalkyl, alkanoylalkyl, azidoalkyl, carbamoylalkyl, alkyl optionally interrupted by a heteroatom; alkenyl, alkenyloxyalkyl; cycloalkylalkyl, heterocycloalkyl; aryl, aralkyl, aralkenyl, heteroarylalkyl, in which aryl is optionally substituted by alkyl of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, alkoxy of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, halo, amino, alkylamino or dialkylamino; aroylalkyl, or heteroaroylalkyl;

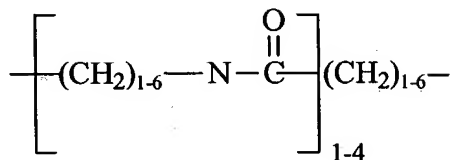
R_3 and R_4 are each independently hydrogen, alkyl, alkoxy of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, halo, amino, alkylamino, dialkylamino, or when taken together, R_3 and R_4 form a fused aryl or heteroaryl group that is optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from alkyl of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, alkoxy of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, halo, amino, alkylamino, dialkylamino, hydroxy and alkoxymethyl; or

R_3 and R_4 form a fused 5- to 7-membered saturated ring, optionally containing one or more heteroatoms and optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from alkyl of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, halo or haloalkyl of 1 to 4 carbon atoms; and

DYE is a dye moiety, with the proviso that the dye moiety is not dansyl; or a pharmaceutically

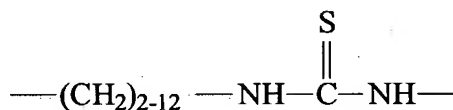
acceptable acid addition salt thereof.

2. The compound of claim 1 wherein R₁ has the following structure:



5

3. The compound of claim 1 wherein R₁ has the following structure:



- 10 4. The compound of claim 1 wherein DYE is a fluorescent dye moiety.

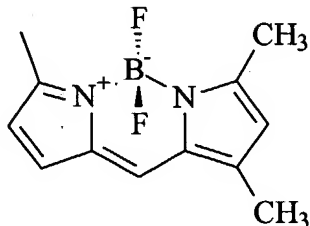
5. The compound of claim 4 wherein the fluorescent dye moiety is selected from the group consisting of dipyrrometheneboron difluoride dyes, fluorescein, fluorescein derivatives, rhodamine, rhodamine derivatives and Texas Red.

15

6. The compound of claim 5 wherein the fluorescent dye moiety is a dipyrrometheneboron difluoride dye.

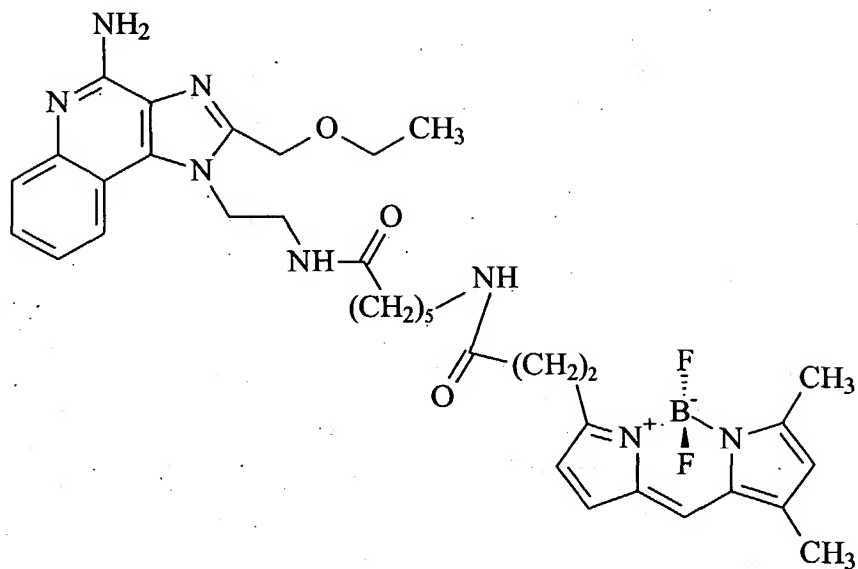
7. The compound of claim 6 wherein DYE has the following structure:

20

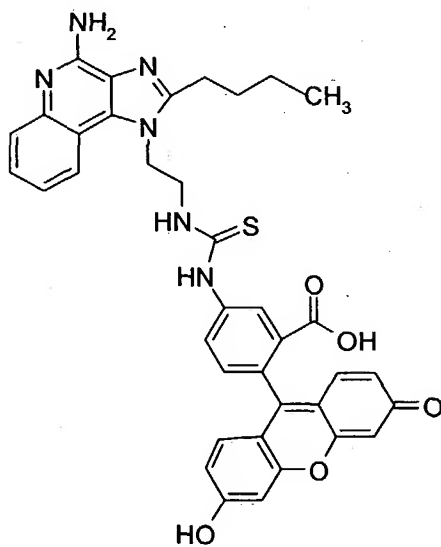


8. The compound of claim 4 wherein the fluorescent dye moiety is fluorescein.
9. The compound of claim 1 wherein R_3 and R_4 together form a fused aryl group, optionally containing one or more heteroatoms and optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from alkyl of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, alkoxy of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, halo, amino, alkylamino, dialkylamino, hydroxy and alkoxymethyl.
10. The compound of claim 1 wherein R_3 and R_4 together form a benzene ring.
11. The compound of claim 1 wherein R_3 and R_4 together form a fused 5- to 7-membered saturated ring, optionally containing one or more heteroatoms and optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from alkyl of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, amino, halo and haloalkyl of 1 to 4 carbon atoms.
12. The compound of claim 1 wherein R_3 and R_4 are each independently hydrogen, a straight or branched alkyl of 1 to 8 carbon atoms, alkoxy of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, halo, amino, alkylamino or dialkylamino.
13. The compound of claim 1 wherein R_2 is hydrogen, alkyl containing 1 to 8 carbon atoms, or alkoxyalkyl wherein the alkoxy group contains 1 to 4 carbon atoms and the alkyl group contains 1 to 4 carbon atoms.

14. The compound of claim 1 having the following structure:



- 5 15. The compound of claim 1 having the following structure



16. The compound of claim 1 having the following structure

